

July 8, 2009

The Honorable Jeff Mayes  
State Representative  
Anderson House Office Building  
124 North Capital  
PO Box 30014  
Lansing MI 48909-7514



Dear Representative Mayes,

As the Chairman and CEO of Wright Tree Service, Inc., I am concerned about Michigan's Frost Law and its negative impact on utility subcontractors. Michigan's Frost Law takes effect during the months of March, April and May each year. During these months, weight limits on certain county roads are generally reduced by 35%. This weight limit reduction presents special problems for my company. Many of our utility repair and maintenance vehicles are not able to meet this reduced weight limit; however, the need for reliable and efficient utility service does not end during those months.

Michigan's Frost Law only partially accommodates itself to the important needs of its citizens and businesses for reliable and efficient utility service. Michigan's utilities and their subcontractors may use county roads under Michigan's unreduced weight limits to respond to emergencies. However during these three months, utilities, **but not their subcontractors**, may obtain permits for their vehicles to use county roads under unreduced weight limits for non-emergency utility work such as trenching for underground electric and gas service and tree trimming in preparation for spring storms. Subcontractors do much of this work. Denying utility subcontractors the same ability to obtain permits to use county roads degrades utility industry efforts to operate reliably and efficiently.

We are a company that provides line clearance (tree pruning), storm restoration and several related services to the utility industry. We perform these services for Consumers Energy in Michigan. We perform subcontract services for utilities throughout the United States in restoration efforts and from Michigan to California on a regular basis. We provide employment to over 200 residents of Michigan.

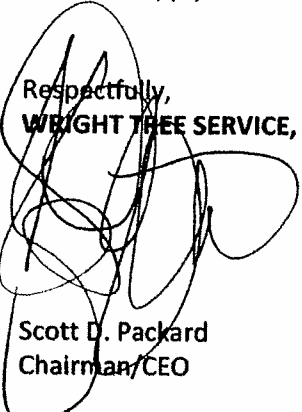
We have been in this business for over 75 years. We carry substantial commercial general liability insurance to ensure we are well prepared for the many risks of our business. We employ over 2,500 individuals, 204 of whom are from Michigan.

We believe Michigan's current law, which allows utilities permitted use of county roads during March, April and May, is a fair compromise between the interests of maintaining roads and providing reliable and efficient utility service. We are doing the same work as utilities, and that work should be accorded the same privileges and responsibilities whether performed by a utility or its subcontractor.

Page 2

I ask for your support of HB 4999 to address this issue. HB 4999 would simply allow utility subcontractors to use county roads during the months of March, April and May under the same rules that apply to the utilities that employ them.

Respectfully,  
**WRIGHT TREE SERVICE, INC.**



Scott D. Packard  
Chairman/CEO

Cc: Energy and Technology Committee

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